GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW AND JUSTICE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:433
ANSWERED ON:04.05.2007
LEGAL AID SYSTEM
Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba;Renge Patil Shri Tukaram Ganpatrao

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to strengthen the legal aid system to provide access to justice to the under-privileged people;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ)

(a) Yes, Sir,

(b) & (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in the answer to parts (b) & (c) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question 433 for 04.05.2007 put down by Shri Anandrao V. Adsul and Shri Tukaram Ganpatrao Renge Patil.

(b) & (c) In order to ensure that the opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities, the National Legal Services Authority NALSA) was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. It aims at establishing a nation-wide network for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker and under-privileged sections of the society. Under the Act, the Legal Services Authorities have been constituted in all States/UTs and Supreme Court Legal Services Committee has also been constituted under Section 3A of the Act. The Central Authority (i.e.,NALSA) is taking up vibrant legal aid programmes by -

(a) Laying down policies and principles for making legal services available under the provisions of the Act;

(b) Framing the most effective and economic schemes for the purpose of making legal service available under the provisions of the Act;

(c) Utilizing the fund at its disposal and make appropriate allocations of funds to the State Authorities and District Authorities;

(d) Taking necessary steps by way of social justice litigation with regard to consumer protection, environmental protection or any other matter of special concern to the weaker sections of the society and for this purpose, giving training, to social workers in legal skills;

(e) Organizing legal aid camps, especially in rural areas, slums or labour colonies with the dual purpose of educating the weaker sections of the society as to their rights as well as encouraging the settlement of disputes through Lok Adalats;

(f) Encouraging the settlement of disputes by way of negotiations,arbitration and conciliation;

(g) Undertaking and promoting research in the field of legal services with special reference to the need for such services among the poor;

(h) Doing all things necessary for the purpose of ensuring commitment to the fundamental duties of citizens under Part-IV A of the Constitution;

(i) Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the legal aid programmes at periodic intervals and provide for independent evaluation of programmes and schemes implemented in whole or in part by funds provided under the Act;

j) Providing grant-in-aid for specific schemes to various voluntary social service institutions and the State and District Authorities from out of the amount placed at its

disposal for the implementation of legal services schemes under the provisions of this Act;

(k) Developing in consultation with Bar Council of India, programmes for clinical legal education and promote guidance and supervise

the establishment and working of legal services clinics in Universities, Law colleges and other Institutions ;

(l) Taking appropriate measures for spreading legal literacy and legal awareness amongst the people and in particular to educate weaker sections of the society about the rights, benefits and privileges guaranteed by social welfare legislations and other enactments as well as administrative programmes and measures;

(m) Making special efforts to enlist with the support of voluntary social welfare institutions working at the grass root level, particularly among the Schedules Castes and Scheduled Tribes, women and rural and urban labour; and

(n) Coordinating and monitoring the functioning of State Authorities, District Authorities, Supreme Legal Services Committee, High Court Legal Services Committee, Taluk Legal Services Committee and voluntary social service institutions and other legal services organizations and other general directions for the proper implementations of the legal provisions.